(b) The number of complaints received by Indian Airlines in this regard were **7** (Delhi-1, Kolkata-6), 9 (Jammu-1, Kolkata-6, Colombo-2) and **24** (Delhi-3, Mumbai-2, Nagpur-1, Bhavnagar-1, Kolkata-11 and Chennai-6) during 2001, 2002 and 2003 respectively.

In Air India, the number of pilferage cases were **198** (Ahmedabad-18, Bangalore-5, Chennai-18, Calicut-7, Cochin-3, Delhi-85, Hyderabad-8, Mumbai-49 and Trivandrum-5), **180** (Ahmedabad-21, Bangalore-9, Chennai-5, Calicut-1, Delhi-70, Hyderabad-6, Kolkata-2, Mumbai-63 and Trivandrum-3) and **269** (Ahmedabad-23, Bangalore-7, Chennai-36, Calicut-3, Delhi-89, Hyderabad-7, Mumbai-101 and Trivandrum-3) during 2001, 2002 and 2003 respectively.

(c) Airline companies have taken several measures to curb this menace.

In Indian Airlines, such complaints are immediately referred to Security/Vigilance for necessary investigation. Further, as per the practice followed by most airlines world-over, Indian Airlines also advises its passengers through a notice in the ticket to the effect that "currency, precious metals, jewellery, negotiable instruments, securities, personal identification documents and items of value are best carried with the passenger in the cabin".

Air India is providing strict security surveillance of all baggage movements. Air India also provides small pouches to passengers to remove their valuables before retrieving their over-sized hand baggage to avoid pilferage of valuables.

Improvement in flight safety record

248. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the year 2004 saw the poorest flight safety record in 50 years of civil helicopter operations in the country;

(b) whether the record has worsened due to violation of the operating norms laid down by Government and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, DGCA;

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to improve the flight safety record of helicopter operations; and

(d) whether the private airlines are the ones whose record in flight safety and maintenance of aircraft is the poorest?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) As and when any violation of operating norms by any operator comes to the notice of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), immediate action is taken. A Working Group has been constituted in DGCA for carrying out constant monitoring of helicopter operations by actively interacting with Operators.

(d) In comparison to helicopters operated by State Governments and Pawan Hans Helicopters Limited (a Government of India Undertaking), more helicopters of Private Operators met with accidents during the period 2000—2004 (till date).

Irregularity in Centaur Hotel sale

249. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the CAG report in December, 2003 which found loss of Rs. 145 crore in the revenue in the course of sale of Centaur Hotel, Mumbai of Hotel Corporation of India;

(b) whether Parliamentary Standing Committee in its report to the Parliament on 10th March, 2003 had observed a number of irregularities in the above sale and recommended CVC enquiry;

(c) whether Government are getting the deal investigated by CVC or CBI, in view of the above; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) On examination of the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee, the Government had taken a view that there was no need for an enquiry in this regard. The Parliamentary Standing Committee was also apprised accordingly in September 2003.